3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

487 cranny in the perpendicular rocks. Among the very few people we saw was an interesting figure; this was the Qazi or native judge of Koserab on his way with three or four men on horses to Tashqurghan, whither he had been summoned by the Amban to try cases according to the Shar'iat or law of the Qur'an. The party forded the river just before meeting us, a picturesque sight; the white-bearded old village judge, with his book of *dala'il* (precedents) and his Qur'an wrapped in a cloth under his arm, rode straight-backed and vigorous at the head of his following.

[221] That night (14th July) we camped in wild and grand, but less green and flowery, country at Toilebulung, the winter [164] headquarters of the Yambulak Kirghiz who grow their crops there and bury their dead in curious little domed mausolea. The elevation was only 9,650 feet, the first time we had been down to four figures since Gircha in the Hunza valley, sixteen days before. We mopped our brows and complained of the stuffiness of these low-lying valleys, until some one pointed out that we were still far higher up than the most elevated Indian hill-station.

•432 Next day we bid adieu to the Yambulak Kirghiz with many [431] invitations and promises to visit them again one day. I had already given old Ibrahim Beg with much ceremony an official present in the shape of a watch. Just before leaving I discovered that he had already disposed of it to Hafiz for five taels (about 15*s*.). As it was only worth about four taels, and as I wanted to impress upon the Kirghiz the enormity of the insult to the British Empire, I publicly reproved Ibrahim, took back the watch, made him repay the 5 taels to Hafiz, and then gave him a cash present of 4 taels instead of the watch. I then, supposing that Hafiz really wanted a watch to tell the time by, sold him the Government watch for 4 taels. The following day one of the other orderlies told me that Ibrahim had bought back the watch from Hafiz for 4½ taels, evidently thinking that as there was such a to-do about the article, it must be a good investment. It was not till after we reached Kashgar, however, that I heard the sequel from Harding, who passed Yambulak two days after us. This was that Ibrahim Beg changed his mind once more about the watch and sold it to Harding's orderly for 3½ taels! Turkis and Kirghiz alike are born traders and would sell the noses off their faces if they could get good money for them.

487 On each of the next two days we crossed passes, the Ter